

SAINT GEORGE.

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AT BRANTWOOD, 8th FEBRUARY, 1899.

By the Editor.

N the 8th February last Mr. Ruskin attained his eightieth birthday, and the event was marked by the presentation of a national address, the text of which is given on another page. As I had the privilege, in company with the secretary of the Liverpool Ruskin Society, of presenting the address to Mr. Ruskin, I venture, in deference to several requests, to give a brief account of our visit to the master.

Brantwood is a little more than three miles from the Railway Station at Coniston, and the road to it, which for the most part skirts the margin of the lake, is of extreme beauty. It commands a noble view of mountain, moor and lake, and as we passed along it on the morning in question, an additional charm was given to the landscape by a series of impressive and ever-changing cloud effects.

Mr. Ruskin's house has been frequently described, and its exterior appearance at least is familiar to many. It is quaint and unpretentious, though larger than would be expected by one who had seen it from the outside only. Of the treasures within the house, it is difficult to speak. They are so numerous, and of such extraordinary interest. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Severn, by whom we were most hospitably received, guided us through these, and thus deepened the interest of a visit, which to us will be

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ever memorable. Mr. Ruskin's study is a long, comfortable, and in every way delightful room, with a superb view of the hills and lake. It is lined with books, of course—I did not see any room in which there were not some—but it also contains many other objects of beauty and rare interest, including a collection of minerals and some paintings by Burne-Jones and Rossetti. Of all his treasures Mr. Ruskin probably prizes most dearly, the manuscripts he possesses of several of Sir Walter Scott's novels.

Next in interest to Mr. Ruskin's study is his bedroom. It is a small room, and in one corner is a simple little wooden bedstead, entirely devoid of any trimmings or ornamentation. One side of the room is covered with books. The other three are almost entirely covered with Turners, and it is these, of course, which give the chief interest to the room. There is probably no other room in the world which could shew such a collection. Although this is the master's favourite bedroom, he has not been using it recently as owing to the severity of the weather, and the weakness naturally arising from his advanced age, it has been thought wiser for him to remain chiefly in another room, which he temporarily uses both as a sleeping and living room.

It was in this room that we were introduced to him. He was seated in an arm chair before a small table, near the window; the sunbeams playing upon his venerable face. In his old age he presents a most impressive appearance, to which his long flowing beard adds not a little. With the exception of that beard it appeared to me that his face had undergone no material change since the days when he was a Professor at Oxford. The lines were indeed more pronounced, the expression sadder, but it was still the face which had been painted many years before, with such admirable skill, by Professor Herkomer. As to Mr. Ruskin's physical condition, it would be idle to deny that he is very weak and frail, but mentally he is quite clear, and though now unable to do any work whatever, he still takes a lively interest in the progress of the world.

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When we were introduced to his presence he received us with gentle kindness. For some time previously it had been very doubtful whether he would be equal to the strain of receiving us personally, but on the morning of his birthday he felt better and stronger, and expressed a wish to do so. He appeared quite happy and peaceful. As I read over the terms of the address, and the signatories it contained, he listened intently and with evident emotion. When I had finished, he could only utter a few broken words, but after he had become more composed he dictated a further reply to Mrs. Arthur Severn, and the following is an exact copy of the words which that lady took down :

“Mr. Ruskin is deeply touched by the address, and finds it difficult to give expression to his feelings of gratitude, but trusts they will be made known for him. He values the address highly, and thinks it charmingly done.”

Perhaps the most striking feature in Mr. Ruskin's appearance is his eyes. They are fresh as a boy's, and very bright and blue. No one who meets their glance can doubt that his mind is perfectly clear.

We learnt at Brantwood some interesting facts respecting Mr. Ruskin's habits of recent years. Until a month or two ago he was able to get out every day when the weather was fine, sometimes taking slow walks, and sometimes going in a bath-chair. Of evenings it was his custom to read aloud some portion of one of Scott's novels, his love for which is so well known. He is now, for the most part, read to. *Oliver Twist* was read to him not long ago, and although familiar with it, the re-reading of the book gave him much delight. The last work which has been read to him is Mr. C. E. Mathews' *Annals of Mont Blanc*.

In the closing years of his life, the master is perfectly happy. He gave expression to this fact on the morning of his birthday. He felt so happy that he wished to live on. He must have been touched beyond all words by the multitude of messages which

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were arriving at Brantwood from all parts of the world. Miss Kate Greenaway sent an exquisite sketch of a group of happy, joyous, dancing children, and one of the most touching greetings I saw was from an American lady, who sent eighty white flowers, bearing the inscription :

“ Eighty flower sprays for eighty pure and lovely years.”

It was a fitting greeting to the great prophet in the twilight of his days, when, as his biographer so eloquently says, “ the storm cloud has drifted away and there is light in the West, a mellow light of evening time, such as Turner painted in his pensive epilogue. There is more work to do, but not to-day. The plough stands in the furrow, and the labourer passes peacefully from his toil homewards.”

ROMANCE AS A FORCE IN PRACTICAL LIFE.*

By the Rev. John H. Skrine, M.A. (Warden of Glenalmond).

THE title of my paper is "Romance as a force in practical life," and it may seem reasonable to begin with a definition, and say what Romance is. I shall not take this reasonable course. First, I think there would be much hardihood in attempting to define Romance; undefinability is an essential characteristic of the thing. Do not let us weary ourselves with refinements about the contrast of the Romantic and the Classical Spirit in Art and Life: we will assume that the romantic, when the word is used in any connection with human interests, means "the beautiful in conduct." Certainly it means the beautiful with a special *nuance*: there are acts and situations to which we might deny the term romantic though we would not deny them beauty, they are too humble or they are too lofty for the word to fit them, they pass into the prosaic on one side and the sublime or tragic on the other, so that we hesitate to speak of the romance of a fireman's venture up a garret stair or of a martyr's agony in an arena. But with this reserve Romance is the beautiful as found in men's lives and deeds, and we are to enquire whether or no a sense of this beauty is a force in these lives of men.

"It is said by Schiller in his letters on æsthetic culture," writes Mr. Ruskin, "that the sense of beauty never furthered the performance of a single duty." None of us here will think it necessary to turn the pages of our *Modern Painters* to learn what Mr. Ruskin thought of such a dictum. His exact phrase, however, is "this gross and inconceivable falsity." In fairness I have to admit that both the German poet and the English critic were thinking of

* A Lecture delivered before the Ruskin Society of Birmingham, January 18th, 1899.

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the perception of beauty in external nature, not of the moral beauty in human action. But the world is one, beauty is everywhere beauty, and it is not a likely story that loveliness in art or nature is incapable of moving the human will but is capable of doing so when seen in the form of practice; so that we may reasonably take this saying of the 'inconceivable' Schiller for a hostile flag to draw our fire. And anyhow his dictum, in this extended sense, will rally the following of a very good number of solid understandings in our country, whom no Ruskin Society has yet reached with its influences. These persons will tell us hardily that Poetry (it is the word they would prefer to Romance) is a very nice thing, especially of an evening and where a man is made that way, but they are not aware that it ever built a bridge, or founded a house of business, or projected a gas company. They will not quarrel with any friend who likes to wear a little fine sentiment, any more than they would quarrel with a partner who came down to the office with an orchid in his buttonhole, provided the weather was fairly congruous, but for their own part they think if the office coat carries the pocket-book, they have got about them all they have any use for. These are the persons whom we set out to persuade: we are going to satisfy them that a man may wear his Romance not as a flower to and from the market, and stowed away in business hours, but as proof-armour or sword at side, never more necessary than in the arena.

Those solid minds whom we are assailing in the name of Romance belong mostly to well-occupied persons who perhaps have hardly found the time to ask why it is they care to be so busy; otherwise it would occur to them that at the base of every human activity there is found an emotion: we act, because we feel something. For the forms of activity which are the most elementary and universal the originating emotion is also elementary and universal: it is the emotion of the man who is hungry: we work, because we are empty and want to eat. But you cannot really evolve all the world of human action out of the imagin-

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ation of dinner and the lack of dinner. Hunger is able to cut a ditch, or drive a pile, or stoke a furnace, though with a want of finish in the performance, but it is inadequate to the evolution of a steam-engine, to the organisation of an army, an insurance office, or a philanthropic agency; and there is Juvenal to tell us that so far is hunger from being able to write an *Aeneid* that you must find Virgil in board and bed and even attendance before he can begin. I suppose that the occupations of most of us who are here to-night, if I may infer my audience from the subject in which they were invited to be interested, will, in the scale of subtlety, come somewhere in between the making of ditches and the making of *Aeneids*. Now, I venture to deny in your name that the most or at any rate the best of our activities are to be explained by emotions connected with regular meals. Even when we have translated the elemental man's craving for something to eat into the desire of our more complex selves for a balance at the bankers; even when the hunger for bread has been metamorphosed under the name of ambition into a hunger for social distinction or the reputed sweets of power: there remains a residuum of energy still unaccounted for by a motive, and that residuum is of our energy the choicest part. You have, I mean, to find the motive of these works of supererogation, those uncovenanted services, which are cheerfully performed by the better members of every profession, and which are just the differentia between the valuable worker and the indifferent. You have to explain the fact called Devotion in the soldier's life or the doctor's, why it is that on occasion they risk life by action beyond the bond of professional engagement. You have to find a reason for pastoral activities of the school-master which are not in the implied contract with his scholar's parent; you have to find a reason for expenditure upon their workmen's lives by captains of industry of time and thought, which is nowhere represented in balance sheets: and again for that final finish of excellence which the good and unterrorised artisan will add to his handiwork in stone or iron for the same

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wage which buys the more slovenly performance. These works of supererogation are to the professional activity just what to the marble, hewn and carved by the statuary's foreman to within a few hair breadths of the purposed mould, are the final touches of the master-sculptor's chisel; they give to the life or the service that incomputable value—perfection. But why are they done? We commonly answer "Here are the fruits of an ethical impulse. This is the finger of Morality." I agree, but I seek to be more precise. An ethical impulse, but of what kind? Morality no doubt, but what finger of hers? And, I say, the impulse comes from the sense of beauty in things. The soldier takes his hazard for the sake of his regiment's honour, the doctor for that of his order: the workman strikes his best strokes because a charm perceived in fine workmanship stimulates him: and for the rest of us, there floats always before us some ideal form of the life as it ought to be lived in the profession which is ours, and the power of this ideal to incite us lies in its beauty. The emotion in ourselves which answers to the stimulus of the object we conceive is the emotion which is correlative to Beauty; it is Love. By whatever more specific name we call it, be it loyalty, reverence, longing for perfection, humanity, altruism, it is a variety of the elemental passion of Love; and suddenly we perceive how clear-sighted were the old Greeks when they gave to the ideal of conduct the name of *τὸ Καλόν*, the Fair, and discovered that the impulse which led men in the search for truth was *Erôs*, the deity of Love, the child the deity of Beauty.

A sense of beauty in things the spring of some of our best activities, that is the contention I am to make good. Observe how generous I shall be, for I abandon as if it had not been made for my purpose the grand illustration of all: I do not adduce the love-story, the romaunt of the cavalier, the passion which climbs the hill and swims the stream. But perhaps, to judge from a changed fashion among our novelists, the young lover is less convincing than he used to be. Besides, the best instance in my mouth will

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be the one for which I can best vouch. There has been published then this winter, opportunely for me, the story of a certain romance which for many years I myself watched at near hand, and which, for its more opportuneness this evening, was enacted on the eastern edge of the upland which lifts your Birmingham into such healthful airs. The book I mean is *The Life of Edward Thring*, headmaster of Uppingham, by his friend and mine, Professor Parkin, of Imperialist fame. The Eastern Cotswolds are a pleasant land but hardly a romantic, yet, if you will trust my memories, that country became to the eyes and hearts of young boys thirty years ago a very fairyland through the genius of a man who gathered them round him there. It was the scene of a much more significant work than that of making a great school out of a little one, the building, namely, of a new ideal of school life. Some of us believe we know the secret of that achievement, and one of us believes that in that secret was included the force I am pledged to analyse to-night. This he believes, because a force by which the master moved the boys must have moved the master's self, since we can only teach what we know, and only inspire that which is breath of life in ourselves. Now, what we boys of the time all remember is that Edward Thring imparted to most human things which he touched, but certainly to all Uppingham things, a super-human glamour. It would seem to us in later life, only the spell still lasts, an absurdity, that we could think so exaltedly about our little state, that we could glow with the cause of the school as with a magical adventure, and fancy our ignorant young selves to be a sort of round-table knighthood, and our leader a Roland or an Arthur; could think his troubles and risks were the stuff of epics and tragedies, that our peccadilloes were full-grown villainies, and our good behaviour the heroism of soldiers under fire. Well, but all these things we did think: at any rate our elders used to smile at our naïve betrayal of them. So far as boys had anything to do with the success (and he took care that we never doubted that we had), what worked on us was the momentum of a romance: and

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it is an irresistible inference that it was this which worked upon their master.

Nor have I much difficulty in defining how the magic worked. It was of the kind specifically called glamour, the magic which makes things seem greater and grander than they are. He had a power unique in my experience, of enlarging the scale of things. "When other people spoke to us," if I may quote some words of my own, written when memory was freshest, "when others spoke, we admired or enjoyed them, but when his turn came, something odd seemed to happen. He was an actor on the same stage with them, but at his first word it was as if the scenery shifted, and his was a figure seen in a lengthened perspective, with a voice pitched for wide spaces." In the sound of that voice the little Midland market-town became earth's true centre, the slender muster of the school a portion of the Church Militant, our cause was a very necessary chapter in world history, the rules of school were the code of the true life, and the breach of them treason-felony.

"Illusion," you say, "the well-known illusion worked on boys by a self-confident elder." Why, yes, illusion as much as you will, if you grant me it was a practical force, and that it was this sense of the enlarged scale of things, of spaciousness, of weight in our humble affairs, which pushed up hill, and up a steep hill, my old master's enterprise. It is no such wonder: to make the scope seem vast is to make the effort towards it seem worth the making.

And let me add that the instance is crucial. For the task of Romance was here not a genial one: she was a creative demiurge who worked in a resisting clay. No native magic clung to the scene, a countryside which barely escapes tameness, a petty township whose people noways threw similar communities into shade, a school without history or social prestige, a daily life made of such stuff as grammar lessons, boys' discipline, entries, withdrawals, vexations of the morning letter bag, obscure intrigues of local worthies, dull hostilities of audit days, and adverse balances at the bank. Great was the magic which made a fairy-tale of this.

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Perhaps I have dwelt too long on my illustration, for in reminiscence there is egotism. I will lose no time in disarming nemesis. My argument shall descend for its illustrations from platform to floor. For what occurs to me is that two and a half score miles from Uppingham, on the eastern side of our Cotswold plateau is the very instance I need to persuade a Birmingham audience. I have not to be taught about the public spirit of your community and its civic triumphs. Indeed I am a ready learner, for as an Englishman who has lived half a score of years beyond the border in a northern country which is the classic land of local self-esteem, I feel in contact with the civic enthusiasm of this spot a grateful and recreative stimulus. Now I call you all as witnesses to the truths of my contention: it is Romance which has been at the making of Birmingham, and has made it by the process I have traced in the little community. I do not know if this account of the origin of Birmingham is generally mentioned by you in public. It is possible that in assigning to Romance this part in your fortunes I am trespassing on a sacred commonplace of your chief magistrate; but it is quite as possible that causes more usually assigned are enlightenment, courage, smartness, good sense, and English grit. One however who remembers from his early studies the vivid life of the Greek city states, which your Birmingham under some climatic and physical differences, so brilliantly recalls, will feel very sure that one fountain of this triumphant energy has been an imaginative one. He will believe that her citizens have been nerved by a spiritual vision, the glory of the Queen of the Midlands, a stately ideal figure, robed and sceptred and emblem-girt, our Lady (shall we call her) of the Forge and the Furnace; and this creation of their reverential fancy has been the inspirer of the Makers of Birmingham. It is the worship of this ideal Lady which has cut your commodious thoroughfares, has lighted and swept and drained them, which has reared admired buildings for public use and dignity, has informed your schools and institutes, vitalised your organisations of culture and

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of politics, and made your walls a chief cradle of liberality in thought and art. I know that by some minds all these good things will be carried to the credit of Utility or Competition or some such ignoble deity, and it is possible that some of the most efficient burghers of this place would disclaim, even with heat, the passion for the Beautiful as a spring of their civic energies: but we shall tell them that they do not know themselves well, and that in their pride in a Town hall or a majestic avenue or their city's character with the world, we have surprised them at the worship unawares of Beauty: they are like the rest of us, it is the vision of the Fair which sets them to their works.

Since however both you and I may distrust our own hearts, and therefore be suspicious of instances from our own altars and hearths, let us fortify our conclusion by a glance at testimony which we can weigh without local bias. Well then, the romance of patriotism, the romance of royalty, the romance of race, the romance of family, the romance of an adventure, the romance of a career, are well-known names for well authenticated motives, and each of them is the name of an ideal which acts on men's energies and conduct, which produces adventures, heroisms, devotions, martyrdoms, abnegations, and produces them by a spell which is not the perception of the Useful, nor yet the conviction of the Good, but is the vision of the Beautiful.

That romance is a spring of action because it is the vision of the Beautiful which makes action worth while, this has been our contention so far, whether or no we have made it good. After motion, direction. Can Romance not impel only but guide?

So much is at once clear that for all conscious movement the goal acts not only to attract but to correct. If a vision of the beautiful can start a current of conduct, it will also be the rule that steers it, the standard that detects deviation. But let us be more specific, and put it thus. Life is for many men and women a work of art:

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they wish it to be good art and not bad, which is to say beautiful instead of unlovely. See then how this artistic impulse becomes a regulative in conduct. For I am not overvaluing a factor in life which is one factor only and a secondary one, when I say that at some turns in the mortal career the consciousness by which decisions are taken is that which we must call the artistic. Shall I take this step, shall I accept this task or that position, becomes a problem of which the solution is phrased in terms of art: Will the unity of my life be retained if I do it, or will proportion be violated? Will such conduct harmonize with the colours of my hitherto character, or will it be a sorry or a glaring patch upon them? Would the contemplated new chapter be a natural development of my story, or an anti-climax spoiling all the piece? These are not the fanciful reflections of superfine people; they are exact formulæ for what is more modestly phrased in our saying that 'there are some things a gentlemen cannot do,' or 'I must not break with the past,' or 'that is not my way of doing things,' or 'one must play the game.' Doubtless we English, with our shy and puritan ways, are unwilling to admit the idea of art into the sphere of the moral or even the practical, and the man who should talk about a proportion or harmony in his conduct, or should be too much occupied with the look of it to spectators, would be voted a prig. Really however what we dislike is the art which fails to conceal art, or art which is spectacular, a gaudy taste in conduct, non-essential splendours, and pomp for its own sake. But these same things are more severely still condemned by art's own principle of unity, which is a principle of purity and singleness, or, to use the moral word, of unworldliness.

If however these considerations are too airy to be of use, let me point out two sources of corruption in the practical life for which Romance is more demonstrably an antiseptic. These are Professionalism and Competition. Professionalism every one hates: I half doubt if in our country we do not hate it too much, and if one who points it out is not raising a wicked hue and cry, for we

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have surely carried our preference for the amateurs somewhat far in the school and the army. But on the whole ours is a salutary scorn ; for the reason why we dislike the professionally-minded person is that he sinks his individuality in a convention, and the human in the mechanical. Now the ugliness of machines remains, after Rudyard Kipling's poetry, still a fact, and therefore no one who thinks we ought to be lovely and pleasant in our lives will ever be professional if he is aware of it. Romance will preserve him from this degeneration.

Then Competition. This too, when we bethink ourselves, is a machine. It is the driving wheel which makes the world go round, the world of the economist and of man that eateth bread. A machine, with all its use and its unloveliness. Say what you will about the poetry of certain forms of the competitive, as war, the stadium, the political wrestling ring ; quote Homer's maxim of 'being ever the first and outvying all who come,' yet you will find that exactly so far as competition is purely competitive, that is, a struggle for yourself against others, and not a struggle on behalf of friend or cause, just so far the glamour falls away from it and leaves it squalid. To sustain the heroic airs round a *Buonaparte* you must throw all the lights on the front of the scene, on the plumes of the mounted staff and the bayonets of the Guard ; you must not brighten up the twilight of the family and personal history in which these effects were prepared. But any other hero of a hundred fights, whether in a cockpit of Europe or in a prize ring, is dispossessed of the heroic as soon as he is clearly discovered to be fighting not for the belt but for the guineas only. This may seem too broadly said, and it may be urged that the man who fights for a reputation or for the love of victory is selfish too, though in a finer way of it, and that he too must shed the heroic. The passion for fame, however, is a social passion : that is its partial redemption. And the love of winning for winning's sake is a form of self-realisation, and this too is in part redeemed by a social aspect: for is it not a kind of social duty to realise whatever excellence is yours,

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to be strong, if that is in you, as to be beautiful, if that is in you? For so the world is served ; it has gained force from the strength which is used, as brightness from the beauty which is worn, and so the fighter renders a kind of duty to the whole of things, though an incident in it is that a brother is beaten. There is still the adventurer for mere adventure's sake, and he seems a person whom we can hardly exclude from the ranks of the romantic (our boys would not let us) even though his quests are a quest of self. Well, the account of him is that of the fighting man, for of that genus he is a species, and he is accredited by a social usefulness. He is the producer of a particular excellence, that of resource and audacity. Observe that this rescues the tale from sordid prose even if the hero be of the scoundrel order : yes, the scoundrel as hero does something for the human ideal ; he illustrates the Indomitable Man ; and if he have a Benvenuto's bounding spirit or the humour of a King of the Mountains, there is a romance, though as from the hand of an Aristophanes.

In all these cases then the poetry is thrown on by a side-light. There is the figure, over-looking the lists, of a Social Cause, whose eyes rain influence and invest the competitor with a sort of involuntary knighthood. Take away this spectator and the tournament of knights becomes a war of rats in a pit. All this was well understood in the golden age of Romance, to whose court a reference on such points is final. In Chivalry, that religion of the fighter, it was the note of the ideal man to be superior to the competitive passion : he must forbear his own advantage, equip with equal arms an ill-appointed rival, and, if lawfully overthrown, take it cheerfully ; whereas to assail with odds, to waylay his man, to hit him when down, or below the knee at any time, was a villainy,—all rules which are the denial of free competition and a homage to the social claim. But this is a point which I have laboured quite enough.

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To move, to direct. Has Romance still a third office in the activity of man? Surely one more—to sustain. The grace of Perseverance, of going on and not to die, this is the third gift.

Here the world, so courteously derisive of poetry as a practical force, is for a moment with us. 'Yes, poetry as the solace after toil, that we grant: here is a corner in human life which we leave it. Day's work is over, night's sleep is near, but there is half-an-hour yet while you warm feet at the fire: then the rest of us will light the pipe, and you who like may open the poem. The novel would be better certainly as a composer, but it has the defect that it is less easy to lay it down and get to bed. Meanwhile below stairs at another fire imagination is rendering the same service to others of your household. There the medium is prose, and the theme is too invariably of Duke, Marquess, and heiress, and the pictured covers are those of the *Family Herald*: but it is all one; at your own hearth and at theirs it is Romance which is the care-looser.'

You grant us so much, Romance as a sleeping-draught: but we want more. We will have Romance not as a drug, but as bread and wine and oil, as life's nourishment, cordial, balm. And it must be Romance not fetched from the shelf like a phial, but distilled hourly from our own breathing life, a vital poetry. "Next to the consolations of our holy religion, the best mode," says a writer, "of rendering our life and its inconveniences endurable, is to give them a colouring of Romance." Ah! 'give them'—can we do that? Is it ours to give? The colouring must be not a pigment but a self-colour, the tint of life's fibre as it grows. Not that we despise the service of the poet's volume or even that guide to fairyland, the *Family Herald*; for they too are imaginations distilled from the experience of someone, however fortified or diluted for the market, and they enable by suggestion and stimulus an experience, which is the reader's own, to take rosier colours and be better seen for what it is. They work their spell, and their student gathers his soul together and possesses it, as he reads of

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passions and deeds and great thoughts which he finds inwardly to be with a difference his own; and downstairs Martha, fired by Lady Araminta's constancy 'would not have had him (the gilded suitor) no, not if he had been fifty Dukes.' They work their spell, and the spell is not illusion but self-knowledge: the secret writing between the lines of our own human story steals out under the warmth to view. Yes, Romance, even if we draw it from the printed page must be the yield not of our fancy but our experience, if it is to be bread to strengthen the heart of man born to labour; its oil and wine must be pressed from life's own fruitage.

That Romance is life's food and drink is, however, not a probable tale, and we must try to give it verisimilitude.

Conceive the soul as force, and what then is the friction which is the enemy of force? Clearly the world, and what we call its rubs. Romance has to repair the soul's waste by the rubs of earth. And these are of two kinds, the painful and the pleasant. For if we think that the annoyances of practical life, the cares or emergencies, the collisions, strains, perplexities, are the only friction on which human nature frays away its energies, we had better remember how many enthusiasms have been thinned to nothing in the pleasing little strifes and triumphs of politics or business, society or the profession, how many ideals have been wrecked without storm or shock on a soft coast of Sirens. Whether the contact which absorbs the soul has been pleasure or has been pain, is presently no matter, since either way the soul is absorbed. But what is Romance that it should hinder this? Why, it is something which has been faintly shadowed out already in this paper, it is the vision, the dim and broken vision, of the Whole. It arises whenever the momentary and local life is discerned as a fragment of the breadth and length and depth and height, when the patch of earth has the light on it of sky and stars, when the traveller in some narrow field discovers his brotherhood with the great, and even the heroic, sees their cause to be his own cause, their secret his secret too. And I ask whether the waste of soul by earth's rubs and absorptions does not find a

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very sovereign remedy in this vision of the whole. Why does a sorrow in childhood look so overwhelming? Because childhood is little of stature and commands but a near horizon, and therefore the present moment shows so giant-like. Could you lift the child to see the vista of his life, that mountain would become the mole-hill which it is. How sound was that nursery philosophy which borrowed fortitude in little aches and woes from the reflection that "it will be all the same a hundred years hence." Not quite true perhaps, for things are as they are and cannot become otherwise, certainly not in a poor little century. But as a way of saying that distance dwindles objects, and that rocks of offence which bruised us on the first reach of the road are, in the sweep of its whole hundred miles, no greater than the fine dust in the balance, the proverb will serve us still. What else meant the wise lyrist who for a cure of passing sorrow, "considered the days of old and the years that are past." Note that he asked no more for the cure of sorrow than half the sphere of time, the years that are past: add the other hemisphere of the future, and how the present is overwhelmed. Then the Greek thinker who found the effect of tragedy to be a purging wrought by terror and pity, was not he in the same story with the Psalmist and the child, discovering with them that the spectacle of a heroic woe can dwarf a private grief, that a sense of the proportion of things, which is to say the vision of the whole, has a salve for little hurts, and a bane for paltry greeds? Yes, a specific for both. For if to be sensible of the vastness of things is to disedge the tooth of an annoyance, more surely still is it to unbait a low allurements. We will be ambitious: we will covet honour: yes, but what really is honour, something which will not be laughably thrown out of scale when the drop-scene flits back, and the stage opens out into the background of the infinite, and there, a spectacle for angels, is discovered little man, like a child surprised at his game, playing with his painted toys of bauble, purse, or trumpet.

But let us bethink ourselves. For all the while what a mislead-

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ing parable is this of force and friction! As if soul were under no other laws than gravitation and projection, and went on its ways like a locomotive or a bullet, instead of being a living thing which can gain force as well as lose it, which lives its life only by the give and take between the organism and the world. Being a living thing the soul need dread friction no worse than the opposite of friction, vacuity. To move in a vacuum, on a line of no resistance, with no dust upon the path, no wind in the face, may be the ideal condition for a planet or a pendulum, not for a man. For him ease and monotony and the smooth track, the uniform succession of the hours, the featureless working day, the automatic offices which he could render in a sleep, are more wasteful of soul's force than rocks or rubs are. To rust out is not only more ignoble than to wear out, it is also a more complete decay. For in life who wears, repairs, but who rusts, cannot. But for vacuity as for friction the vision of the whole is a remedy. Monotony and pettiness of fact are the norm of a human career: our day is of very small things, and the interest of life is dealt out to each one in the pettiest change, but the secret of spiritual success is to keep ourselves aware of the significance of little things, to see in the small silver a token of the gold, to discern in the dust-atom a microcosm mirroring the universe, a mote which shines to prove how far has come the sunbeam. Plainly, it is to do a petty task with a tender precision, as if our hand were the Creator's graving-tool; to fulfil a relation in business or kinship with as thoughtful a justice as if we involved in it the honour of the Universal Mind; to render a kindness as if the heavens smiled approval and we did it unto them.

Last, if Romance is the power upon man's practical life, which I have claimed, why is it so?

Have we noted the high affinities of the Romantic? Have we, on the moral side, observed how the spirit which underlies every true morality, is the spirit also of Romance, a vital and inseparable principle in it? Are not self-abnegations and self-devotions,

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constancies and venturings of life or weal, the characteristic incidents of the romantic in conduct? And is it not the case that however a career or episode may be naturally fitted by its accessories to illustrate the beautiful, yet beauty falls away from it the moment a selfish aim is perceived as the ground of it, so that the fairest opportunities are disenchanted thus, and love has no romance when it is a mere affair of the senses, nor chivalry when it is a name for privilege, nor war when it is all for loot? Again, on the intellectual side, have we done justice to the association of Romance with Mysticism, an association which is of its essence, and which, if we use our terms with the precision I at first disavowed, is what distinguishes the Romantic from the Classical? So have we asked whether when some people describe behaviour as romantic, meaning civilly to call it unpractical, they are not witnessing that Romance has for its natural opposite materialism and the world?

What is it that is hinted in these considerations if not—what we will make a leap and affirm boldly— that Romance is in truth a religion? If Religion be a reading of the secret of human existence, of the Whence and the Whither, then a religion is Romance. A Natural Religion of course. It claims to be only one of the creeds of a Natural Theology, but then it is not less. It is an intuitive knowledge of the Not-Ourself, of the Infinite in its relation to our finite existence, a knowledge conveyed to us through that organ which we call a sense of the Beautiful. It is not indeed a theology, for it is altogether evasive and not to be formulated, not a reasoned system but only a wistful surmise: but it has some of the power of a faith to detach men from the phenomenal and transient and make them, as the preachers say, despise the world, though by the faith in an unknown deity whom it ignorantly worships; it is a light of the conscience, though such light as comes to us, enchanted but perplexed and dim, through the rich-dyed panes between Gothic traceries: it is an answer to the question Whence we come and Whither go, and to the question

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how the path between shall be trod by the passenger, though the answer only tells us that the land whence the soul came from was a fair one, and its goal is fair, and fair is the life which is the way thereto.


There I have said it. Romance is a practical force because it has an answer to the things a man wants to know. By answering these questions have all religions been strong, and so is this one. As long as man's sojourn in the sphere of sense is a matter of curiosity to himself, as long as Birth and Death hold round them a mystery of which no time has yet disrobed them, so long Romance waits beside every man in his passage from the great deep to the great deep, and has some mastery on his act. If we ever doubt it, that is only because we cannot really know our neighbour and therefore cannot read his romance.

Let us end, as wise Plato used, with a myth, so that Romance may be her own witness to her character as a religion.

The legend of our England is the epic of Arthur, and of this epic the crown is the story of the Holy Grail. Not love of women then, and not love of war is the secret of chivalry, but a worship, the pursuit of a Holy Thing. Let but the Cup of the Passion be found and seen of men, and all the world shall be healed. Our chief poet of the Grail has made its quest, for all but the few, a wasteful chase misleading men in the wildernesses: this however is not primitive but an afterthought. The makers of the legend meant by it that the very goal of chivalry is the sight of the divine. *Visio Dei vita hominis*, man's life a seeing God, that is their parable. I do not pursue it; but I ask why it is that Romance becomes more romantic when she passes the bound of sense and treads a field which is religious; why the crown of knighthood is Galahad who walks with the Grail, and next unto him is Percivale who beholds it from afar. Why, but because to Romance the spiritual is her native air, and only in the touch of it she attains her self.

PEASANT LIFE IN MODERN GREECE.*

By W. H. D. Rouse, M.A., F.R.G.S., M.R.A.S.

 HERE are two ways of looking at Greece. One is the scholar's way, which those follow who live in the past, who have been enchanted by the glory of ancient literature and art, and think of Greece as the scene of deeds that will never die. The other is the way of those who know Greece through Byron's passionate outbursts; when it was but a dream that Greece might yet be free, when the down-trodden peasant, ruined and half starved, was adjured thus:

Approach, thou craven cowering slave!
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?

These last forget that Byron lashed the faults of the Greeks in order to rouse them to action. it was not his business to speak of their virtues. Then again, they have a vague idea of the cruelties of the War of Influence, and the anarchy which filled Greece for a generation after the war was past; but of its history since 1850 they know nothing, except that the government has not always been able to pay its debts. For them Greece is still full of brigands, and craven cowering slaves; though where the slaves end, and the brigands begin, they do not quite clearly understand. The late disastrous war has confirmed them in the mean opinion they have of the whole nation. Most people are pleased when they can say "I told you so;" and few Englishmen know that mad as the enterprise was, there was something heroic about it. A fiery indignation at the woes of one's kindred is not a thing to mock at; and it was this which drove the Greeks to fight without counting the cost. If the secret history of that war is ever written, it may prove that not the Greek people, but the German King George, was the craven cowering slave. However, it is not my purpose to speak

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of this, though I could say a good deal about it. I wish to present to you a short sketch of the Greek peasant as he is to-day, his life, and his manner of thought. I shall use the word Greece so as to cover all those lands peopled by the Greek race: that is to say, it shall include all the islands of the *Ægean* Sea, from Paros to Chios, from Samothrace to Crete and Rhodes; the greater part of the Macedonia, and the sea-coast of Asia Minor. For even those parts of the Levant which belong to Turkey, are not peopled by the Turks. The mainland has a number of Turkish settlements; there are several thousands of Turks in Crete and in Rhodes, two or three thousand in Cos, Lesbos, and one or two of the northern islands; but for the most part the Turks are no more than the government and the army of occupation. We find, then, in the smaller Turkish islands, a Greek population of several thousands of souls, held down by a couple of hundred soldiers and a complete outfit of governor, under-governor, harbour-master, commandant, and attendant tax-gatherers.

It must be borne in mind that there is no aristocracy in Greece. When the Turks got possession of this region, they deliberately exterminated all those families which by birth or tradition had influence over the rest. The natural leaders once removed, to subjugate the remainder was an easy task. Twice, when some movement of revolt gave uneasiness to the Porte, it was deliberated in the imperial council whether the whole Greek race should be annihilated by massacre. The proposal was rejected only because there would be no one left to pay taxes. For the idea of the Turks is, that subject races exist merely for the profit of their rulers; and so for centuries they drained Greece of such wealth as it had, not only in money and kind, but in human life. At stated intervals inspectors came round, and held a *levée* of all the young male children of each village: the best of these were then chosen, and taken to Constantinople, where they were circumcised and brought up as Moslems. These formed the famous corps of Janissaries, which did so much to spread the terror of the Turkish name. These

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facts explain much in the history of modern Greece. When after a terrible and protracted war, the Greek peasants had by sacrifice of nearly all they had to lose driven the Turks from their impregnable mountains, and when Europe stepped in to establish the new kingdom, there were none fit to be trusted with the rule of it, and none whom the people would look up to as their superiors. A foreign king could be found, and found he was; but to this day nothing has been able to supply Greece with men fitted to rule. There were none rich enough to give their lives to the public services, and it was necessary to pay the members of parliament. The result has been that parliamentary life has become a living, and the men try to get in and stay in for the pay. It is easy to imagine that this leads to intrigue, and makes it very hard for a man to remain true to his convictions. Greece is a good object lesson for those who see nothing but evil in the voluntary system of our own parliament. The one hope for Greece is that as she prospers, a class of men may grow up, who have wealth enough to make them independent, and the public spirit which comes from generations of public service.

But Greece is a poor country. If we look at the map, we shall marvel how the three Powers in 1833 could even have dreamt she could prosper with a boundary to the south of Thessaly. There may be some mineral wealth in Greece, though the mines of Sunium are exhausted; there is a great deal of fine marble; and the wines, in the opinion of competent judges, are capable of being made a great source of wealth: but all these things need capital, and capital is just what Greece has not. The Greeks are a nation of peasants and fishermen. The peasantry have the virtues which are seen all over the world in the agricultural class: honesty, simplicity, industry. The fishermen follow a life which of all others develops patience, courage, hardihood, and resource. These classes always have a natural culture independent of all education; and there is in Greece the material of a nation.

The life of the Greek peasant ought to be of interest to a Ruskin

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Society, because he is almost sufficient unto himself for all things. He has probably built his own house, or helped to build it; at any rate, his wife and daughters make all the household linen on their looms, with thread spun by themselves from their own flax. In spite of the influx of shoddy German goods, there may still be found some who can make a carpet or rug, and embroider the traditional designs on home-made silk. The peasant feeds on the produce of his own garden, on the milk of his kine, and cheese made by his shepherd upon the mountains. Such of his simple needs as he cannot supply, send him no further afield than a neighbouring island. He may get his saddle-bags from Asia Minor, his mule-trappings from Lesbos, his top-boots from Rhodes or Crete: but all within the Greek circle. Up with the dawn, he works till the twilight falls; then sups, and to bed. There are few excitements in his life; only those which have an eternal interest for man, marriage, birth, and death, the festivals of the church, or the visit of some traveller who brings word of the great world, and a whiff of free air with him.

The traveller who visits the Levant has to put up with rough accommodation and many small hardships. He must be prepared to sleep on a bench, under a shed, in a stable, in the open air, on the deck of a sailing boat: to go half-a-day on a cup of coffee an inch deep and a crust of bread; to travel on mule or donkey at two miles an hour; to spend days on a cockle-shell coasting steamer full of filth; to pass from island to island in a clumsy fishing-boat which cannot sail close to the wind. Add to this the vexations of the Turkish custom house, which confiscates all books it espies, from the Bible to Bradshaw, and throws every possible obstacle in your way. But it is worth all this and more, for sheer beauty of scenery and freshness of air, let alone the historic interest of the places. Then too, once you get among the Greeks, you all are all right. To be an Englishman is the key to open a Greek heart; and if you make one friend at your place of landing, or if you have one introduction, you are the

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friend of the whole island. The hospitality of the islanders is boundless. Many a time I have gone into a strange village with a letter of introduction, oftener without, and have received the warmest of welcomes. Last summer, I travelled from Rhodes to the old city of Lindos. It was late at night when I got there, about 9-30 and quite dark. I had been told there was a doctor in the place; and for him I enquired first. He was out, so I went on to the nearest coffee-house and dismounted. Those who sat talking there gave me good evening, and asked the usual questions; I said I had been enquiring for the doctor, but he was out. 'Oh' said a man, 'we'll fetch his son,' and so they did. The son at once went off to his mother, and by and bye I was told that my hosts were awaiting me. The family had partaken of a frugal meal long since: but they busied themselves to get ready a chicken and such dainties as could be got on the spur of the moment; and after a hearty meal, I was given the best room to sleep in. Next morning when I woke I found the the young man waiting with a large basin and a jug of water, which he poured over my hands in the Homeric fashion. He then showed me all the town had of interest, and thus the morning went by. Then followed another meal, which my hosts could not share with me (it was the time of the long fast), and I took my leave. These hospitable folks were perfect strangers to me, and I had no introduction. The next evening I was the guest of a poor woman, whose house consisted of only one room. She turned out with all her bairns, and stayed with a friend, while I had the whole place to myself. Poor as the people are, to offer payment for such hospitality would be to insult them. The visitor may however bring his own dinner without offence. Perhaps he has a gun with him, and shoots a hare or a brace of partridges, on the road; or he may buy a chicken, and hang it behind his saddle. On arriving, he delivers this provender to his host, who arranges for cooking it, and provides what else may be necessary. When the traveller has no introduction, the usual thing is to go to a coffee-house, and

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enquire if there is a some place where he may pass the night. Somebody is sure to be willing ; and then the host expects a gift of a couple of shillings next day on departing.

But whether payment be made or not, the traveller always feels himself among friends. You have been riding, we will suppose, for six or eight hours, and arrive at your destination. Your host comes to the door to bid you welcome ; you dismount, and enter a gateway which opens upon a courtyard. On one side of the yard, or perhaps on three, the house is built. Underneath are storerooms, kitchens, and so forth ; a wooden staircase leads to the upper part, where rooms give upon an open verandah. Here you are met by the lady of the house, who shakes hands and bids you welcome in her turn. You enter the best room : it is bare of furniture, save perhaps for an old dowry-chest, but along one or two sides there is a divan covered with cushions. Here you take your seat, and cigarettes are produced. In a few minutes the youngest daughter of the house enters, bearing a tray with a small jar of some delicious sweetmeat, glasses of water, and drams of mastick (a kind of spirit.) You take a spoonful of the jam, and wash it down with water ; then you drink your dram of mastick, to the health of your Hebe, who smiles upon you and returns the good wish. When this ceremony has been disposed of, you sit smoking and talking for an hour or two, while your hostess is cooking the dinner. There is always plenty to talk about, for your host has an insatiable curiosity, and hardly ever sees a book. He wishes to hear all about yourself first ; who you are, where is your home, whether you are married or not, whether you have any children, where you learnt Greek, why you are travelling, anything and everything in fact ; and equally willing to speak of himself. This subject exhausted, politics come next, What is the news from Crete ? Is England going to annex Crete ? Will she annex this island (whatever it may be) ? This is a consummation devoutly wished by nearly all the Greek islands. Why does England do nothing for us ? She is our only friend,

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the friend of freedom. Then comes praise of Byron and Gladstone, and the usual tale of tyranny which all Turkish subjects have to tell. High politics next follow: alliances, German greed and unscrupulousness (with a hearty curse), Russian treachery, the hopes of American friendship. The Greek has a rare intelligence, and talks better on politics than most educated Englishmen; for he has no party prejudices (in Turkey at least), and takes a wide view of the subject. Freedom and justice are what he prays for, and besides these most other things are small. Where he gets his information is the marvel; he has no books, and no newspapers except what have passed the Turkish censor; yet from mouth to mouth the word passes, and what is learnt in this way is very real. Now perhaps he will begin to tell stories; and the Greek is inimitable as a story-teller. He is vivid and full of life, his gestures are unstudied but most expressive, and it is impossible to be bored when a Greek will talk. By this time a delicious smell has begun to arise; and soon one of the daughters makes her appearance, with a low round table which is set before you. On this she lays a spotless white cloth, which she has probably woven herself on the loom out of thread which she herself spun. Knives and forks are put on it, a couple of glasses, and a bottle of wine. Then the birds make their appearance, cut up and done in a savoury stew, with herbs and flavouring such as I know not elsewhere: Spartan sauce has always been famous. Your hostess and host now say again, "You are welcome;" you reply in a set formula; you each cross yourself by way of grace, and fall to. Perhaps there are even plates; but if not, you and your host attack the dish from opposite sides, and work to the middle. When you have finished, there is usually not much left. The lady of the house never sits down with you; she remains at hand, however, to fetch bread or more wine if it be required, and joins in the conversation. The meal is finished with fruit and cheese; after which tiny cups of very strong coffee come round, and cigarettes once more; and very soon you are ready for bed. The table is

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cleared, and mattresses are laid out on the floor ; you lay yourself down on them, and in a few minutes you are deep in slumber.

Such are the events of the evening ; and on your daily way you will meet with the same friendliness. Every wayfarer greets you with a Good day, or Good luck to you ; and when you sit for an hour's rest at some village coffee-house, the owner and all his friends are eager for a talk. Usually the doctor, or the mayor, or some important local personage insists on ordering coffee or mastick for you, and often enough the keeper of the coffee-house will ask you to drink with him, especially when it turns out you are an Englishman. If you want anything done, the whole village is at your service. One will offer to show you the ancient watch-tower near by ; another will scurry off to find coins ; a third will go messages for you. They never expect payment for these things, which are done from a natural courtesy. Not less marked is the absence of snobbishness in the Greek. Your muleteer will do menial service for you without feeling degraded, and will sit down to share your frugal meal without offering impertinence.

In many places the fare is poor and the lodging rough ; and the traveller is fortunate who finds a monastery at hand when the shades of night fall. There strangers are sure of a welcome, which indeed he may claim as of right. These institutions are endowed with a certain amount of property in land, which the monks let or cultivate themselves ; and one of their duties is to give shelter to the passing wayfarer. Some are small, only three or four Kalógeri, or "Good Old Men," as they are called ; others may have room for fifty or sixty. They are built like a college, round a quadrangle, in the centre of which stands the church. The buildings are of two stories ; offices and store rooms below, and above a number of cells or suites of rooms opening on a long verandah. The older monasteries are strong, and the outer windows are small and barred ; for in ancient days they had to serve as fortresses, often enough. The monastery of Patmos, for example, looks like nothing so much as a mediæval castle. The quadrangle is usually

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entered by a large arched gateway, running beneath the upper storey of the building. You are expected to dismount outside, and walk in; whether from respect or by tradition, I know not. A servitor-brother then takes charge of your horse, and leads the muleteer away with him; meanwhile you await the summons of the Hegoúmenos, or Abbot. You visit the Abbot in his reception room, which forms one of a comfortable suite of apartments. There he entertains you with coffee and cigarettes in the usual way. After this a room is assigned you, and you find your saddle-bags awaiting you there. At the proper time food is provided you, either alone or in company with the Abbot, or even with several of the monks; and many a merry tale and jest is told over the meal. Perhaps you have arrived on the vigil of the annual feast. In this case you find the whole monastery full of people: men, women, and children throng all the rooms, and sleep in the verandah or on the roof if that be flat; the quadrangle is full of mules, horses, and asses. I have slept on such occasions in a room with a dozen others, who lay on the floor in rows like herrings in a barrel. On the morning of the holy day, the bell tolls at dawn, and every one goes to the service; if the church boasts of any relics of the saints, these are produced and kissed by the worshippers. The service takes about three hours, after which the men join in a common meal in the refectory. The women usually eat apart, probably because there is no room for all to be together. The men sit round a long table with a marble top, rich and poor together, and partake of a kind of a meal-porridge prepared after a traditional recipe in huge copper cauldrons. This done, you thank your kind friends and depart, not forgetting to make a small present to the cook.

There are many famous monasteries in the Levant, and many centres of ancient worship not monasteries. In Lesbos, for example, there are two great sanctuaries; those of the Panagía, or the Holy Virgin, at Ayásson, and of the Archangel Michael, at Mandamádos. Each of these places has its church, with living

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rooms ranged around it in a quadrangle, where the visitors lodge. Sick folks especially come to the annual feasts at these places, because the holy persons are believed to work miraculous cures. The feast of the Panagia at Ayassos takes place at the end of the Sarakostè, or fortnight's fast, on the fifteenth of August (Old Style). Fasting is a serious matter in the Levant. For fourteen days the people abstain not only from meat, but from all fish save shell fish, and from oil, butter, cheese, wine, and many other things. The vigil of the feast is kept with music and dancing; and at dawn on the feast day, all repair to the church. There is no room in the church for the multitude, and the whole quadrangle is crowded with worshippers. Within are the sick, many of whom have slept in the church during the previous night, as the ancient Greeks used to sleep in the sanctuary of Æsculapius, and in the morning they lie in rows along the aisle, for the bishop and procession of priests to step over their bodies. The day and night following are spent in a carnival of revelry. All the year round a few sick may be seen in these buildings, whither they come for the prayers of the attendant priests. The church at Mandamádos is unique in possessing an image of the Taxiárches or Commander of the Host, as they call the Archangel Michael. It is well known that all images are forbidden in the Eastern Church, and only pictures allowed; and this image probably represents some very ancient worship, perhaps Hellenic. What is still stranger, he is black and very ugly. He is an active Saint, and wears out several pairs of boots annually with walking about at night.

Almost every church, and even roofless shrines which are dotted all over the country side, have their annual Panégyris or feast on the saint's day. Much the same scenes take place as we have described. The consecrated bread used on holy occasions is stamped with a traditional pattern, a cross with 'Ἰησοῦς χριστὸς νικῶ, 'Jesus Christ conquers,' very much like the design on a Byzantine coin. After the service the bread is distributed among all the

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people, who take a large lump each and drop a coin into the plate for the priest. Tables are often set in the precinct, and grapes and mastick provided; the people all taste of these, and wish each other health and wealth 'till next year,' *σὺ δὲ χρόνῳ*. The sacred icon is brought to the door, and held for everyone to kiss; and the rest of the day is spent by the priest in carrying it round to the houses of the village, repeating a prayer in each house. The day passes in feasting, and in the evening all repair to the sea shore and dance; or if the village be inland, they dance in the streets. Many curious customs are linked with these festivals and dances. It is quite likely that the dances are of immemorial antiquity; for we see on old vase-paintings (for example on the famous François vase at Florence, which dates from the 6th century, B.C.) rows of youths and maidens linked hand in hand, going through rhythmic paces. At present the dancers generally hold the ends of a handkerchief. Sometimes there are two rows, facing, who advance and retreat singing as they go. The songs are partly traditional; but often two young fellows will improvise verses, one copying the other, taking for their topic any matter of interest, such as the local characters, births and weddings, or yourself if you happen to be a visitor. Often a kind of divination is practised: tokens are put in a cup of water, and a girl blindfolded takes out each in turn, reciting some traditional couplet as she does so. In Cos this custom takes a sportive shape. The tokens are put in by representatives from each village of the island; and the water with the token in it is then left out in the open air all night. Next morning, the people assemble. A woman is chosen who knows a store of old songs; she repeats a 'good song' and a 'bad song' alternately, and then picks out a token. The song is supposed to apply to the village which owns the token, and there is great merry-making over this business.

The rest of the year passes in uneventful fashion; there is plowing, sowing, and reaping; fruit culture and root culture; vintage and the treading of the wine press. The peasant works

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no more than he must to live; not only because the climate makes it natural to be indolent (and yet the Greek is by no means lazy) but because in the Turkish empire taxes are so oppressive that it does not pay to do more. There are not only tithes, land taxes, and house taxes, export and import taxes, but in some places taxes on each tree; so that a man who plants has to pay taxes for years before he can get any return. There are no roads, but there are many road taxes; and there are bribes, every official's palm has to be greased with *bakshish*. How crushing are all these demands, one example may suffice to show. In Cos last year there was one merchant who grew and exported twenty tons of water-melons; and his net profit was three pence. Births, marriages, and deaths are almost the only excitements.

Weddings are not arranged by the young people themselves. The youth expresses his aspirations to his parents; and if they approve, the match-maker is called into requisition. She is usually an old woman known to both families, and she discusses preliminaries with the parents of the bride. These with their nearest kinsfolk then pay a visit to the bridegroom by night, carrying torches, and the bridegroom 'gives his word,' as the phrase is. A day or two after, the bride's relations bring the bridegroom the ring of betrothal, sometimes together with an embroidered kerchief. The next thing is a visit of the bridegroom and his friends to the bride. Arrived at her house, they fix an iron nail in the threshold on which the bridegroom steps 'that he may become strong as iron;' and the whole party is sprinkled with scented water. The youth then presents gifts to his lady-love. In some places the bride's family used formerly to send the bridegroom a pair of polypus, to symbolise that as the polypus clings to the rock so the pair must cling one to the other. Before the final ceremony, there are great preparations; quantities of sweet cakes are made, the bridal bed is adorned with richly embroidered hangings, and while these things are a-doing the traditional songs are sung. The ceremony is performed either in the church or the bride's house, and the priest

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sets a crown on the head of the pair. The proper thing used to be for the bride to faint after this was over, and her friends then restored her with rose-water, but now the brides have more courage to meet their fate. Then come feasting, health-drinkings, singing of songs, and dances, which continue for several days. It will thus be seen that a wedding keeps the folk employed for a long time.

On the third day after a birth, the nurse washes the babe before all the friends of the family in a bason; each visitor casts in a small coin, which the nurse keeps. The three Fates are supposed now to enter, to write the babe's fortune on its forehead or otherwise to foretell it; food and sweetmeats are often left out for them, that they may be kind.

A death is the signal for terrible scenes of lamentation. All the women of the family with dishevelled hair sit about the corpse, lamenting and beating their breast, and singing the songs of mourning. One or other of them is usually able to improvise, and she sings in a harsh wailing voice the virtues of the deceased. The bystanders are much affected by these *Mirológia*, or dirges, which (as the Greek proverb has it) make the very stones and rocks to crack. If none of the family is good at this kind of thing, the aid of professional mourners is called in. Most famous for dirges are the islands of Myconos in the Greek Kingdom, and of Calymnos in the Turkish. The dead are borne to the church on an open bier, with face uncovered; very impressive and pathetic is the sight of the dead passing through streets full of the living. Memorial services are performed three, nine, and forty days after the death, and again after three months, six months, one, two, and three years. On all these occasions, or as many of them as the family can afford, bread and cakes are distributed to the priests and to the poor. The cakes are of special shape and specially made after a traditional recipe. In some places, the body is dug up after three years; if it is decayed, they look on it as a sign the man was good, and lay his bones to rest elsewhere; if not fully decayed they regard him as a sinner and

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bury him again, resuming the recurrent prayers for his soul for two years more.

The shepherds upon the mountains form a class apart. Each island has its own local dialect and customs; but the shepherds have their own dialect, and to some extent their own customs, apart from the rest of the island or district they live in. Many very ancient words and grammatical forms are preserved amongst them. They live a hard life, alone for months together with their flocks, dwelling in a little hut or shelter, and seeing no man. There they milk their sheep or goats, and press the milk into delicious white cheese, which is stored in skins or in small baskets until they can convey it into the valleys for sale. These men often amuse themselves with carving, or spend hours in piping to their flocks on a pipe of reeds. Their *μάνδραις*, or huts, are guarded by wild wolf-like dogs, as was the hut of Eumæus in the *Odyssey*. But they welcome the visitor warmly, and share their frugal meal with him, or give him to drink of a huge wooden bowl full of milk or refreshing curds.

Such is the life of a Modern Greek peasant, and I think you will agree that there is little of the brigand about it, and not a great deal of the craven cowering slave. There is of course yet another side to it. When a man is confronted by a pitiless and all-powerful tyranny, he rarely defies it; and before his masters the Greek of Turkey must bow the head. But that is the bow of Naaman in the house of Rimmon. In the small islands resistance is absolutely hopeless; and life is sweet. What the Greeks can do when they have some hope of success has been shown during many centuries in Crete; and had there been the smallest victory on the Greek side during the late war, I know that in some at least of the islands the men were secretly armed, and all was ready for a signal which never came. I hope I may live to see the great powers do tardy justice to these unhappy lands; or if not, that the match may be set to the gunpowder, and that corrupt empire won by the sword and watered with innocent blood, may bleed out its own life at length, and by the sword may perish.

RUSKIN HALL, OXFORD.

By J. A. Dale and L. T. Dodd.

FEBRUARY 1899 has been a memorable month for Ruskinians. A writer in one of the dailies has recalled a conversation of some years ago, in which Mr. Ruskin spoke with very natural disappointment (and not a little native pessimism) of the small practical effect of his ethical and economic teaching. But now, witness is springing up on every side to prove that his labour was not vain, nor his seed sown in unreceptive ground; and there is abundant proof that the age is beginning to realise that the despised prophet of a generation ago was really teaching its best interests, and that his intuition was voicing the best thoughts which were striving to little effect in its mind. The very existence of this Society of the Rose and of *Saint George*; the increasing number of clubs and circles for the study of his work; and most impressive of all, the affectionate addresses presented to him on his 80th birthday fully witness to this. Most impressive because many notable men, who differ emphatically from him on smaller matters of opinion, and practical details of administration, yet in full confidence in the truth of his message, and deep reverence for the justice of his principles, joined in doing him honour where "now he sits silent and at peace, waiting for the word that will release him, and open to him a world where he may gaze on the Vision of Perfect Beauty unhindered and unashamed."

This feeling that he is the most venerable of the prophets of the new movement, and that his teaching follows the lines along which Society must progress, has prompted the choice of a title for the social experiment just begun at Oxford. Ruskin Hall, which was opened at the great meeting on the 22nd of February, does not bind itself to follow the tenets of any leader, but its activity has for its motive that same enthusiasm which has inspired all Mr.

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Ruskin's life and work. Although Ruskin Hall is primarily an educational institution, it is very far indeed from following in its details the scheme laid down by Mr. Faunthorpe in the last issue of *Saint George*. The two principles upon which Mr. Ruskin's system is ultimately founded are, the Dignity of Labour, and the Necessity of Faithful Living, both of them too familiar to members of the Society of the Rose to need any further words: and the picture which occupies the place of honour in the Hall is a reproduction of the old caricature "Ruskin the Roadmaker." It is with absolute faith in the rightness and ultimate triumph of these principles that the founders of Ruskin Hall are beginning their mission. Mr. Vrooman and his Assistant Mr. Beard, are both Americans who have won their spurs in social service. Mr. Vrooman originated the movement which has succeeded in inducing the largest American cities to open public parks in their most crowded quarters. He has also for many years been one of the most vigorous organisers against the corrupt rings which have made the municipal politics of the United States infamous.

As it is necessary to guard against false inference from the title of the Hall, so also its position must not be allowed to mislead. It has no official connection whatever either with the University or with the University Extension, and it is not its object to provide workingmen with a university education. Its primary aim is much more practicable and immediately useful: to encourage intelligent reading and teach logical habits of thought, to give its students a basis of knowledge to justify their position with regard to the politics of the day, to teach them how to form consistent and coherent opinions and give their thoughts a cogent and intelligible shape, to give them some sense of proportion in the vast field of human life and knowledge; to provide them, in short, with the incentive and the means to become intelligent and useful members of society. The plan on which the attempt is to be made will be explained later: the spirit is best summed up in Mr. Vrooman's own words: "whatever is can be improved." The

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question naturally arises : Why was Oxford chosen as the scene of the experiment rather than America? In the first place, because of the greater number of educational means of reaching the intelligent labouring classes in America; secondly, because it was thought wise to begin this new educational movement under the shadow of the greatest educational institution of the English-speaking world, for the sake both of the inspiration of its "impulsion of forgotten ages," the practical help of Oxford men, and the prestige that its Oxford birth will give it when the movement extends back again, as it is meant to, to the New World. There is indeed a special fitness in the circumstance that an educational institution, which is to teach through other lessons the sense of proportion in history and thought, the infinite stretch of knowledge and the short compass of a man's capacity, the pride of false learning and the humility of true, should be set in an atmosphere still instinct with the fragrance of humanism, in the unwonted shade of halls which still in very truth, "whisper from their towers the last enchantments of the middle ages."

EDUCATIONAL COURSE.

It must be remembered that Mr. Vrooman does not claim that the following course of lectures is perfect, nor does he boast that it will give an ideal education, or that it will turn a labourer into a Socrates, but merely that it will furnish the labour leader with at least an elementary knowledge of history, political economy and political science.

The full course provides for one year's residence, from the 22nd of February in one year to the 21st of February in the next. The main subject of study is history, since the founders believe that only by an adequate conception of the forces of the past, which have contributed to the making of modern civilisation, can men understand the problems, both social and political of that civilisation. Mr. Vrooman holds that "the best of the Prophets of the future is the past." The historical course, as now arranged, includes English Constitutional and Political History, followed by

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lectures on American History, and completed by a comparison between the present forms of government of Great Britain and America. In addition there is to be a course of the industrial history of England, showing the condition of labour in various periods, with special emphasis laid on the struggles of the working classes to better their conditions; such books as Webb's History of Trade Unionism, and Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations, together with Roger's Economic Interpretation of History are to be the standard works for these lectures. Another most valuable course, judged from the particular standpoint taken up by the founders of this Hall, will be that on Political Economy, in which the different theories of the various writers on the causes of poverty and the best, most scientific and most rational methods of its prevention, will be investigated. Thus, it is hoped that the labour leader will return home with some grasp of the true economic relations of capital and labour, wealth and poverty, production and consumption. Besides the lectures already enumerated, the syllabus includes courses on the History of Christianity in England, on Comparative Religions, on European History, on Psychology, on Philosophy and on Present Day Institutions, these latter lectures taking place in the Town Hall and given for the most part by officials in public departments, who are actually struggling with the problems about which they lecture.

TUTORIAL. But it is necessary to remember that, in spite of this elaborate list, the lectures do not form the main department of the work, a position which is rather to be filled by as perfect a tutorial system as possible under the circumstances. Every regular student has *personal instruction and advice* from competent tutors as often as can be arranged; his studies are directed and his progress watched as carefully as possible, and he is supposed to take his difficulties and his questions to these tutors. One of the most important items of the course has still to be mentioned, namely, the Essay. Once a week according to the present scheme

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each student must write an essay, on the subject he happens to be studying, which after careful correction, is returned to him with a clear explanation of its faults and its merits. Thus the writer is materially assisted in acquiring a good English style, with a terse and forcible vocabulary which, it is expected, he will use to some purpose elsewhere. In every department of study special emphasis is being laid upon the use of books, that is to say, upon the way a book ought to be read, slowly, intelligently and with thought, and Ruskin Hall believes that, if during residence there this lesson alone should be learnt, yet the knowledge will be well worth the time and money. In opposition to this close pursuit of education or rather in alliance with it, is the exercise which those in actual residence are taking, such as football and cricket and rowing, which will enable them the better to resist the relaxing influence of the Oxford climate.

ENTRANCE QUALIFICATION.

It may seem perhaps to a casual reader of the Ruskin Hall prospectus that the entrance qualification, which is stated to be a good moral character and the ability to read intelligently, is none too high to ensure the ultimate success of the new venture, but this must be taken in connection with the fact that far more applications for residence at the Hall have been received than could possibly be entertained ; consequently a process of strict weeding out has had to be carried on, and only the most promising in every way have been accepted. Mr. Vrooman has very rightly considered that an enterprise like the present ought to be started with only such a number of students as he was sure could be really looked after without too great a strain on the managers. In consequence he determined that no more than thirty students should be allowed up at Oxford, at least for a time, when perhaps success might have engendered greater confidence in the new institution, and experience have taught whether any modification of the original plan was necessary. In consequence Ruskin Hall has opened with twenty-five students,

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their ages ranging from eighteen to fifty, and one must bear in mind that in spite of the ill-omened words of its first opponents, the men have been obtained with no difficulty except that of selection.

The next matter of importance is to understand what kind of men have taken advantage of this chance of higher education. This is absolutely necessary, if a thorough grasp of the aims of the institution is to be obtained. The men who have come to Ruskin Hall are leaders of the people, that is, men who by merit, courage, ability or some other virtue have succeeded in gaining influence among their fellows. Some are leaders in their trade unions, others perhaps are on their vestry, others on board of guardians and so on, men however who not only have already raised themselves, but have the ambition to proceed further and accomplish more. These are the men who will in the future lead the vast mass of the nation, and the object, end and aim of Ruskin Hall is to educate these men higher so that they may guide their followers better, having themselves a truer grasp of the trend of real progress. The principle at least is noble, and there could be no better guarantee of practical success than American enthusiasm.

Thus it is seen that the students who have entered at Ruskin Hall are from among the best class of artizan, and are men brought up to Oxford by a real desire to learn, not absolutely ignorant, nor on the other hand cultured, but men filled with an intention to work as best they can.

DISCIPLINE. It is obvious, of course that in such an establishment there must be a disciplinary influence of some kind, but in this respect Ruskin Hall perhaps is nearer akin to the freedom of America than to the greater strictness of England. The men will be up at Oxford for serious education and it is not expected that there will be much difficulty which cannot be dealt with by judicious management, and of course in the last resource there is always left the option of expulsion from the Hall. It may

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as well be mentioned that absolutely no alcohol is allowed on the premises, chiefly perhaps on the score of expense, which it is desired to keep as low as possible. Another class of students besides the residents at the Hall is the artizans of Oxford, who come to the evening lectures delivered under the auspices of the new institution.

FINANCE.

When first this scheme was mooted everyone agreed in asserting the impracticability of the plan; the wise said "how ideal! how sentimental!" but shook their heads and prophesied that not only would the founders not obtain the requisite funds, the desired class of artizans, nor the sympathy of Oxford, but that if the Hall was actually started on its career, an early death alone could be predicted since there would be no sure economic basis on which to build. It may however be emphatically stated that sufficient sums have been given to allow of several years' continued trial, and that on the financial side the new enterprise is all that could be desired. Residence at Ruskin Hall costs ten shillings per week including board, lodging, and laundry, whilst tuition fees amount to ten shillings per month. Thus for thirty-one pounds a student may be in residence for a year, attend the whole course of lectures and have the advantage of tutorial supervision. But, it will be argued, many artizans would not possess even this meagre sum; it will be totally beyond the pockets of many who may be only too anxious to avail themselves of this opportunity of higher education. But for such as these provision has already been made; allotments having been hired outside Oxford, where the colony will grow its own vegetables, and thus give work to its own men, who will be able to earn here their board and lodging. Possibly it may be objected that the institution cannot possibly pay expenses at ten shillings a week, but it must be remembered that at Valparaiso, Indiana, and other American Universities, the expense is only from five shillings to eight shillings a week, although living there is considerably more expensive than living in England.

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Then again there have been provided for students of more ability than the ordinary, scholarships valued at six pounds a year which will relieve them of their tuition fees, and form a reward of no little value for "industrious valour." Thus except expense of tuition (which is paid out of endowment), the Hall when in proper working order will be entirely self-supporting.

As to the actual board, there is "good fare but no flavours!" that is to say the food is substantial and of good quality, but eminently simple, indeed far more so than is the living of the ordinary working man of the present day. Haricot beans, as cooked in America, form one of the staple foods, whilst meat is provided about five times a week. Another innovation in this institution of novelties is the authority wielded by the ladies of the Backworth Club, a society formed by Mrs Vrooman with the object of exerting its humanising influence over the students of Ruskin Hall. This Club has undertaken to supervise all the household arrangement, culinary matters and the various details of household affairs usually under the feminine eye. Among their other good works these ladies are encouraging a course of lectures on Literature and Art, including some on the Works of John Ruskin, the purpose of which is to acquaint the student with his social, education, and art ideals.

CORRESPONDENCE CLASSES.

From the comprehensive statement given above, it is clear that the object of the movement could not satisfactorily be attained by a few months' residence in Oxford, and that the number of men for whom even this will be possible must be, comparatively speaking, small. Hence a Correspondence Department is being conducted to spread further the influence of Ruskin Hall, and to foster habits of systematic reading and study in the routine of daily life. A plan of study is prepared in each of the courses detailed above and complete instructions and advice sent out with each set, to ensure that the work is not merely crammed. To aid the student in so assimilating his knowledge

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that it becomes a part of him, a monthly essay is expected from each student on his own particular subject. Very great stress is laid on this essay, because it is regarded as the best possible means of teaching the actual control and arrangement of ideas and knowledge. The essays are carefully examined by two tutors from two points of view:—firstly, grammar and style, secondly, subject matter. Then a carefully prepared letter of encouragement and criticism is sent, so that the student may see the best way of turning his mental powers into a practical working instrument, perceive the hopefulness of his efforts, and feel that his tutors take a very real personal interest in his progress. In the great majority of cases the influence of Ruskin Hall will be exerted mainly by correspondence: most of those who have been in residence will, after learning definite methods of study extend their knowledge and their usefulness by joining the correspondence classes, in which they are expected to take a minimum course of three years. No one for one moment dreams that sufficient education can be imparted in the time available, to teach the habit of self-culture; the process must be lifelong. The fees charged for membership are two shillings first month, and one shilling per month afterwards: those who do not have access to libraries can have the necessary books supplied for ten shillings a year postage free both ways. It is in this connection that Mr. Vrooman makes his only appeal for material help: books are needed for the Lending Library. Anyone who can get five or more others to join him, may form a class, and by acting as its secretary and treasurer have all his fees remitted. From time to time the most successful organisers of such classes will be given an opportunity to earn their expenses for a year's residence; and the founders hope that all those who show marked activity in this department, will sooner or later be recognised. Thus the full benefit of the scheme is ready to reward any who are willing to make a determined effort both to educate themselves and to place their energy at the service of their fellows. And by this means

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the sphere of influence of Ruskin Hall will be spread and a sure foundation laid for the wide extension of the movement.

Such then are the inspirations, aims and methods of the new venture. Of course it has met and will meet with some opposition, which may be divided into two classes according as it comes from:—the Gallios, who care for none of these things, and are therefore startled or bored; the thoughtful people, who while giving more or less emphatic assent to the general principle, find fault with the management and fear unfortunate results. The objections of the former class do not call for consideration: only with regard to Oxford, where there is always some support for any forward movement, many enthusiastic undergraduates are engaged in spreading knowledge of the scheme and obtaining sympathy, by arranging discussions, both privately and in the college debating societies. The objections of the second class must be treated with every respect. Setting aside some minor objections to details, the main opposition may be summarised thus:—1st. *That the movement is, or will become, a propaganda of certain socialistic tenets.* This it must be admitted is a danger, but neither certain nor fatal. The founders seem firm in their determination not to allow the Hall to be abused for any undue partisanship. Again, of the present students only one quarter are professed socialists, one half being Radicals and the rest Conservatives. So the danger does not seem very certain or imminent. And even if it were, it must be remembered that to all markedly forward movements some latitude and indulgence must be allowed, and some charity shown. Those who have taken the trouble to understand the aim and basis of the movement, will no doubt feel that it is well worth some risk. 2nd. *That if liberal-mindedness is inculcated and wide views taught, a labour leader so educated will, when he returns, have lost the confidence of his quondam followers.* It may at once be admitted that this might happen in some cases, especially as uncompromising partisanship is often found to lead to popularity. And it is a simple truism that any widening of

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ideas excites distrust among those who remain in the old narrow groove. But this, so far from being a bar, is a real incentive, for it only proves conclusively the need for a general raising of the level of knowledge, and confesses at the outset that those who are so educated, become wider in their views as their horizon broadens. It has been already shown how far-reaching is the educational influence of Ruskin Hall; and who can doubt but that the spread of liberal culture *must* tell in the end, and restore again the balance, if it be disturbed, but restore it at a higher level than before.

3rd. *That the period of residence in Oxford will prove an unfortunate and disturbing break in the student's life, which would more than discount whatever advantages he gained.* This objection has already been answered by the statement of the aim and object of Ruskin Hall, and the Correspondence Department. No encouragement is offered to the men to leave their old sphere of work: indeed it is the very soul of the system that they should return and become radiators of good influence; that they should raise their fellows and not rise above them. The danger of being thrown out of employment will undoubtedly cut off many men, especially married men, from the advantages of residence. But in the first place the great majority of students must always be members only of correspondence classes. And already some manufacturers have given generous help by promising to allow some of their workmen after spending a short time in Oxford to return to their old places. Again it is very unlikely that this danger will deter a young man who has no one dependent on him, if he is sufficiently in earnest and enthusiastic. Every new movement, especially if it be bold and original, is beset with dangers, and there will be many who fear the worst. This venture and its leaders have youth on their side: and what is the use of youth if it cannot inspire confidence that, if an effort be strenuous and directed towards an end universally felt to be right, some good must come of it?

It must not for a moment be thought that the establishment of Ruskin Hall in St. Giles, Oxford, limits in the least the bounds

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Mr. Vrooman's ambition, indeed he himself considers it only as a centre from which may emanate an educational system fitted and prepared to spread over the whole of the English-speaking world. In a few years it is expected that the offspring of the parent hall at Oxford, will have spread the spirit at least of John Ruskin through the length and breadth of the world, among those to whose service he has devoted the best powers of his mind and the most general impulses of his heart. It is a hard matter to prophesy, and moreover one in which little honour is to be acquired, yet it does seem as if Ruskin Hall has every necessary element for a great and permanent success: for surely few are willing to combat the principle on which it stands, whilst the details are obviously capable of alteration as occasion demands. Thus it will be seen that this must not be taken as a mere isolated movement to educate a few artisans yearly, but as a great attempt to raise the whole labouring class to a sense of the power they possess and to the necessity of using that power aright.

SAINT GEORGE.

Brantwood,
February 8th, 1899


TO JOHN RUSKIN, ON HIS 80th BIRTHDAY.

There was no snow on Coniston Old Man,
The Langdale lines were not grizzled grey,
It seemed the Winter had not come that way
That endless Spring the golden age began;
And you for whom this life's allotted span
—The four-score Summers of our mortal day—
Had dawned, you heard at Brantwood voices say
"Your springs of thought run clear as erst they ran."
O joyous healer of dull labour's hours!
O brave revealer of dark mammon's sin!
O sure swift feeler for our people's woe!
We bring the laurel chaplet and the flowers
Such crown as angel ministers may win
To utter something of the debt we owe.

H. D. Rawnsley.

REVIEWS.

Ruskin: Rossetti: Pre-Raphaelitism. Arranged and edited by William Michael Rossetti. London: George Allen, 1899.

 R. W. M. Rossetti tells us in the preface to this book that its "contents are restricted to that part of my brother's life which began with his personal acquaintance with Mr. Ruskin, 1854, and ended with the death of his wife, 1862." It will thus be seen that the period treated of is one of extreme interest, and students either of Ruskin or Pre-Raphaelitism will read with fascination much that this work contains. Mr. Rossetti has brought together for the first time a large number of letters, M.SS., extracts from diaries, and other papers, which give us a vivid picture of the Pre-Raphaelite movement in its earlier stages, and of the daily lives and struggles of its founders. The chief interest of the book centres around Ruskin and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, though there is much also concerning other well-known names.

The letters which are published from Ruskin to Rossetti show the lavish generosity with which he befriended Dante Rossetti and Miss Siddall, afterwards Mrs. Dante Rossetti. This is a book which can best be reviewed by extract, and we therefore quote the following passage from a letter written by Ruskin to Rossetti in April 1855. Miss Siddall was very ill at the time, and as both she and Rossetti were wretchedly poor, he was anxious to arrange to send her to Wales at his own expense, and also to make Rossetti's own path more easy. He fears however that Rossetti will object to being placed under an obligation to anyone in carrying out any main purpose of his life, and he thus writes to him :

"I think it well therefore to tell you something about myself, and what you really ought to feel about me in this matter.

"You constantly hear a great many people saying I am very bad, and perhaps you have been disposed lately to think me very good. I am neither the one nor the other. I am very self-indulgent, very proud, very obstinate, and very resentful; on the other side I am very upright—nearly as just as I suppose it is possible for man to be in this world—exceedingly fond of making people happy, and devotedly

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reverent to all true mental or moral power. I never betrayed a trust—never wilfully did an unkind thing—and never, in little or large matters, depreciated another that I might raise myself. I believe I once had affections as warm as most people; but partly from evil chance, and partly from foolish misplacing of them, they have got tumbled down and broken to pieces. . . .


"Now you know the best and worst of me; and you may rely upon it it is the truth. If you hear people say I am utterly hard and cold, depend upon it it is untrue. Though I have no friendships and no loves, I cannot read the epitaph of the Spartans at Thermopylæ with a steady voice to the end; and there is an old glove in one of my drawers that has lain there these eighteen years, which is worth something to me yet. . . ."

We have no space to quote further from this most interesting letter, but Ruskin goes on to press his assistance upon Rossetti in the most generous terms.

We are grateful that Mr. William Rossetti has given to the world the contents of this book, and if we read his preface aright it is not likely to be the last collection of papers on the same subject which he will edit. We should recommend that the book be read in conjunction with the chapter on "The Pre-Raphaelite Battle" in M. Sizeranne's "English Contemporary Art."

The reproductions of Rossetti's pictures, which appear in the book under notice, are very charmingly done and add greatly to its interest. The cover bears a design by Mr. F. W. Burgess, which is well done and appropriate.

Art and the Beauty of the Earth. By William Morris. London: Longmans & Co.

 HIS book consists of a lecture delivered by the late William Morris, at the Burslem Town Hall, on Oct. 13th, 1881. It is printed at the Chiswick Press with the golden type designed by him for the Kelmscott Press. That type is very clear and beautiful, and no one can look at the printed pages of this lecture without a feeling of pleasure.

REVIEWS.

The lecture itself is, as one would naturally expect from its author, an eloquent appeal for the pursuit of beauty in our social life. Morris realized that our Art could never properly flourish, nor our workmen become great craftsmen until our social conditions had been reformed and purified. "I desire," he writes, "that this great country should shake off from her all foreign and colonial entanglements, and turn that mighty force of her respectable people, the greatest power the world has ever seen, to giving the children of these poor folk the pleasures and the hopes of men. Is that really impossible? is there no hope of it? If so, I can only say that civilization is a delusion and a lie; there is no such thing and no hope of such a thing."

When the hand of Death removed William Morris, the world lost one of the greatest of modern reformers.

NOTES.

THE NATIONAL
ADDRESS TO
MR. RUSKIN.

The following is the text of the National Address presented to Mr. Ruskin on his 80th birthday, which he attained on the 8th February last :

TO

PROFESSOR RUSKIN, M.A., LL.D., D.C.L.

Dear Master and Friend,

The Eightieth Anniversary of your Birthday gives us the opportunity of offering our united loving greetings and heartiest congratulations.

As the representative Members of the Saint George's Guild and the Ruskin Societies of the country—owing so much of the good and joy of life to your words and work—we feel that the world is richer and happier for the lasting benefits which you have been able to confer upon all who have come under your influence.

Year by year there is, in ever-widening extent, an increasing trust in your ethical, social, and art teaching, an increasing desire to realize the noble ideals you have set before mankind, in words which we feel have brought nearer to our hearts the Kingdom of God upon earth.

It is our fervent hope and prayer that the joy and peace you have beneficently brought to others may return in full measure to your own heart, filling it with the peace which comes from love of God and the knowledge of the love of your fellow-men.

It will be a great happiness to us if you will consent to your portrait being painted by your life-long friend, William Holman Hunt, and accept the same as the national property of the Saint George's Guild, in token of our affectionate devotion.

Appended to this our Address of Congratulation, we have the further happiness to subscribe the following additional lists of names of representatives of National and other Institutions, all of whom have directly and personally intimated their unanimous wish to be allowed the opportunity of being included in this general expression of their deepest respect, profoundest admiration, and sincerest affection.

Wishing you yet many years of peaceful rest,

We have the honour to remain,

Ever yours in faithful and dutiful service,

THE SUBSCRIBERS.

The Address was promoted by the Ruskin Societies of Glasgow, Liverpool and Birmingham, but in addition to the officers of these societies it also bore the signatures of representatives of national institutions and of a large number of distinguished men and women

NOTES.

in every department of public life, including nearly the whole of the members of the Royal Academy.

The decoration of the Address, which was on vellum, was done by Mr. Pilley of Sheffield, and the border work included designs from the old masters. The Address was conveyed to Brantwood by a deputation consisting of Mr. J. Howard Whitehouse (editor of *Saint George* and honorary secretary of the Ruskin Society of Birmingham) and Mr. William Wardle (honorary secretary of the Liverpool Ruskin Society). Mr. William White of Sheffield acted as honorary secretary to the movement. An account of the presentation is given in another part of this number.

THE PAINTING OF MR. RUSKIN'S PORTRAIT.

It will be observed that the Address contains a request to Mr. Ruskin to allow his portrait to be painted by Mr. Holman Hunt. Unfortunately, however, it is quite impossible for this proposal to be carried out, as Mr. Ruskin's health would not admit of him giving the necessary sittings. It is satisfactory therefore to know that Mr. Ruskin has already been twice painted in his old age—by Mr. W. G. Collingwood and Mr. Arthur Severn respectively.

RUSKIN HALL, OXFORD.

We give in this number a full account of the constitution and aims of Ruskin Hall, Oxford, and it is therefore only necessary for us here to record that the Hall was opened on February 22nd last under the happiest and most encouraging conditions, and in the evening of that day a great and enthusiastic meeting was held in the Oxford Town Hall, presided over by Professor York Powell, at which the inaugural address was delivered by the Founder, and the first students were formally admitted.

The following trustees of Ruskin Hall have been provisionally elected:—C. W. Bowerman (London Society of Compositors), A. Sellicks (Amalgamated Society of Engineers), Ben Tillett (Dock,

SAINT GEORGE.

Wharf, Riverside and General Labourers' Union), W. Millerchip (Co-operative Societies), and J. Howard Whitehouse (Ruskin Societies). The officers are: Warden—Dennis Hird, M.A.; Sub-Warden—H. Wilson (of Hanley).

RUSKIN'S
HERNE HILL
HOME.

At the Mart, Tokenhouse Yard, on March 20th, Messrs. John Bott and Sons sold four semi-detached family residences at Herne Hill, for £7,600. The sale was of unusual interest from the fact that one of the houses, No. 28, was formerly the residence of Mr. Ruskin. In this connection Mrs. Arthur Severn writes from Brantwood, Coniston:

"Mr. Ruskin's father bought a lease of the house at Herne Hill in 1823, when he took his wife and little son (then four years old) to live there. When the son (John Ruskin) was twenty-one they moved to the Denmark Hill house (now occupied by Mr. Walter Druce), adjoining the house of the late Sir Henry Bessemer, the famous inventor. In 1871, when I married, the Herne Hill house was given to me by my cousin (John Ruskin) for the remainder of his lease, which expired in 1886, and then my husband (Arthur Severn) renewed it for twenty-one years with Lady Nottage, who became possessor of the property. She is now selling, but my husband still has a lease of "John Ruskin's early home" till 1907.

"In 1871, before Mrs. Ruskin's death, her son bought Brantwood. She died a few months after, and he then sold the reversion of his Denmark Hill lease, and has ever since (when in London) made his home with us, at the old Herne Hill house. . . There he wrote his first volume of "Modern Painters."

BIRMINGHAM:

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